

**COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
MEETING MINUTES**

Wednesday, June 21, 2017 (10:00 am – 12:00 noon)

I. Welcome

Kimberly Wasserman – Chairman

II. Introductions

A. Teleconference

- Commissioner Brenda Carter
- Commissioner Millard Driskell
- Commissioner Keith Harley
- Commissioner Cheryl Johnson (joined late)
- Commissioner Veronica Kyle – Faith in Place
- Stephanie Bilenko – NEIS
- Jamie Wilson – Cook County Forest Preserve

B. Videoconference Chicago

- Commissioner Kim Wasserman, Chairman
- Rev. Booker Vance

C. Videoconference Springfield

- Commissioner Chris Pressnall, IEPA, Environmental Justice Officer
- Commissioner Peck - IMA
- Elizabeth Rupel - Illinois EPA
- Nick Tadie – IMA Intern

III. Approval of Agenda

The meeting did not meet quorum. Meeting proceeded in order to update Commission members that were present.

IV. Approval of the Minutes

The Commission could not approve the minutes due to quorum not being met.

V. Presentations/ Discussions

A. IPA letter follow-up discussions

Chair Wasserman

- the deadline to respond to the request for comments from IPA is Friday, June 30
- not enough time to comment as Commission
- will be future opportunities to comment
- asked Chris Pressnall to provide Commission with updates.

Commissioner Pressnall

- Met with IPA Director Star at the Solar on Brownfields Conference
- Told IPA that Environmental Justice Commission and IEPA would help with the effort and would be glad to talk about the Director's options.

Chair Wasserman

- Thanked those involved in the construction of the letter

- Mentioned the request for comments to the IPA questions
- Draft plan is expected in August with a September deadline and a 30-day comment period.
- Suggested weekly conference calls
- Draft a letter to address the EJ Commissions stance, which will need to be approved by Commission members.
- Asked for Commission members to send their non-available dates in August and September.
- Once plan released, Commission will likely have about two weeks to work on comments, one week to review and one week to approve
- Noted that portions may be contested

Commissioner Pressnall – indicated that it was likely certain portions of the draft procurement plan will be attacked and noted that aspects of the FEJA were already under attack in the courts

Chair Wasserman – Asked if the Commission members present to the meeting could commit to the draft process and also asked if the explanation of the schedule made sense to those present.

The Commission agreed to the schedule and agreed to sending in their availability.

Commissioner Kyle – asked Pastor Vance with Faith in Place, if he had any updates or could provide any support as this plan goes forward.

Pastor Vance

- The plan is crucial
- All groups involved that will be preparing comments need to identify rural, urban areas and need to figure out the “double connectors.”
- There is a four-week window and the groups involved will need to “double up and find resources to support us.”

Commissioner Pressnall – acknowledged Pastor Vance’s plan and added that the will continue working on increasing membership and participation in the Commission

Chair Wasserman

- will send out emails for draft plan and weekly call information
- due to the need for a quick turn-around, Wasserman asked Commission members to respond with availability in a timely manner.

B. IEPA EJ community outreach distribution list

Commissioner Pressnall

- Asked Commission members to help spread the word to other organizations or interested parties that may want to be added to the distribution list.
- IEPA would like to move away from paper and populate an email list
- IEPA is looking into adding a function on the website which would allow for interested parties to add themselves to the distribution list via the internet.

Commissioner Peck – thought the suggestion was good idea

VI. New Business

VII. Old Business

VIII. Open Discussion/ Questions

Pastor Vance – If EJ is clarified and the definition is “tightened up” Illinois can be the leaders in discussion.

Commissioner Pressnall – Agreed that Illinois can be a leader and noted that IPA can continue to make changes to the definition of “EJ Community” as Solar For All is implemented.

Commissioner Peck

- Explains that the Solar for all and the incentives behind the bill will bring a positive light to EJ communities
- Growing EJ should be a positive connotation not negative, and we need to move more in this direction.

Commissioner Kyle

- Agreed
- Stated that this is an opportunity for Solar For All to expand the definition of EJ and make Illinois a more sustainable state
- Noted that the view of EJ term should be changed and is excited for the future
- New trend, new vision for EJ in the nation

Commissioner Pressnall

- Our group can make positive impacts.
- Applauds Commissioner Kyle’s comments
- States that there should be equal weight to the good we can do instead of addressing reactionary issues

Chair Wasserman – change the dynamic and create a robust and bold definition in order to create a good opportunity for neighborhoods where this is needed.

Commissioner Pressnall

- “Self-designation” is a term that needs to be clarified in regard to IPA’s request for comments and the Solar For All program
- The term stems from demographic criteria and IEPA’s public participation efforts and may not be appropriate for Solar For All, could water down the process.

Chair Wasserman

- It is important to determine criteria; race, income, and all manner are important
- Do not want a definition where the entire state could potentially be designated an EJ area

Commissioner Driskel – asked for further clarification regarding the dangers in drinking water

Chair Wasserman – indicated that she would call Commissioner Driskell to further discuss

IX. Next meeting date and location

Wednesday, August 16, 2017, 10am – 12 noon

X. Adjournment

10:38 am